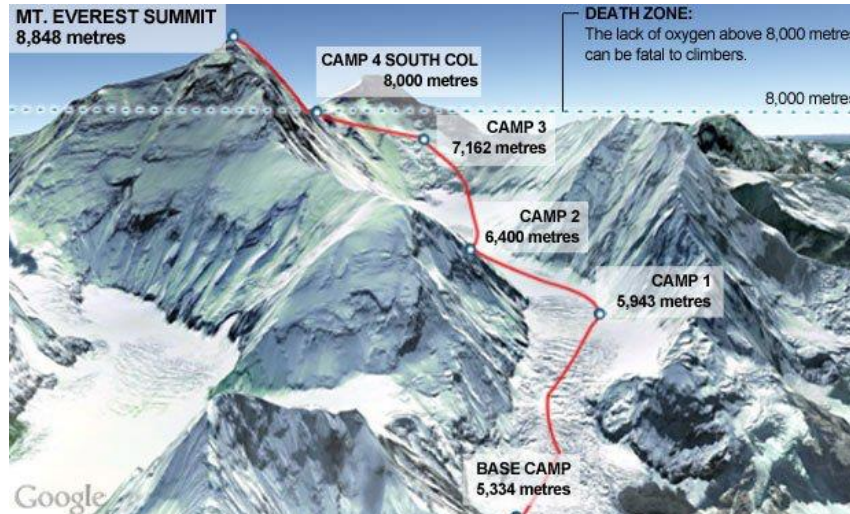


Hebrews 10:26-39, “Finding Endurance”

5.19.19

We continue to climb mountains around here and as we do, we continue to learn and see the difficulties in doing so. Whether you are climbing an actual mountain like Mt. Everest or you are climbing a “life mountain,” climbing isn’t easy. After all, you don’t climb a big mountain in 10 minutes or even 10 hours for that matter. A test of endurance. In fact, as I’ve told you, if you are going to climb Everest, you’ll be on the mountain for around 30 days going through all of these various camps:



Truly, to make it to the top of Everest, you don’t need speed...you need ENDURANCE. Honestly, it makes me tired just looking at that chart! And maybe that’s how you feel this morning. Maybe you feel like you’ve been climbing an Everest in your life. Maybe the air is kind of thin where you are right now, and perhaps you’re feel frustrated or disheartened...maybe you’re just plain tired. Well, if that’s the case...let me seek to encourage you this morning...and let you know that today we’re going to talk about **“Finding Endurance.”** That’s the title of this morning’s message: Finding Endurance... finding the strength to go on, when you feel your strength is almost gone.

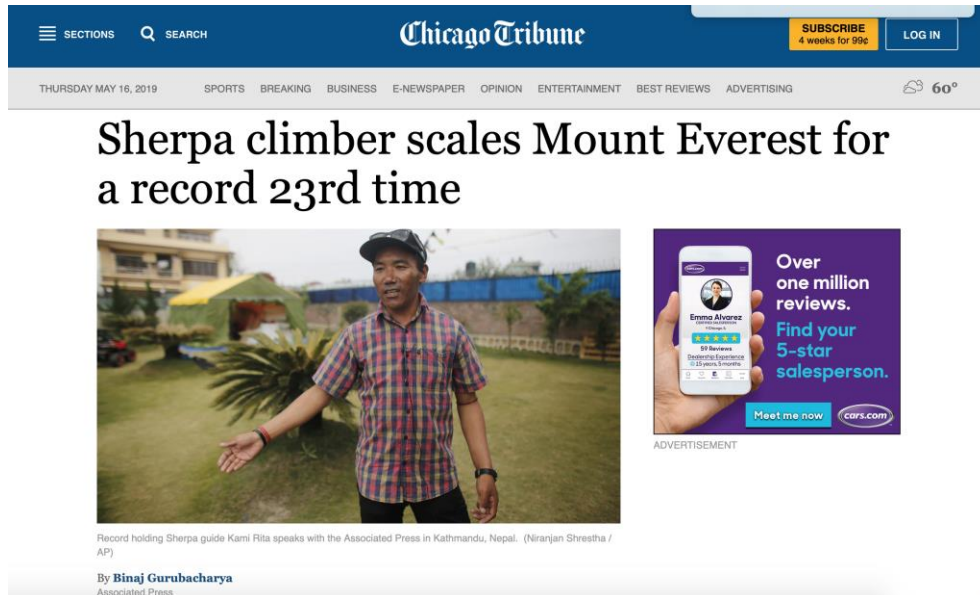
You see, I believe this is exactly the sentiment we have found in the book of Hebrews, for those first-century Jews, who were experiencing unbelievable persecution and hardship. The Apostle Paul seeks to encourage, with a warning. Verse 26...

Hebrews 10:26-39

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, “Yet a little

while, and the coming one will come and will not delay;³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Take a look at the screens and you'll see this headline that was reported just this week in the Chicago Tribune:



The screenshot shows the Chicago Tribune website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'SECTIONS', 'SEARCH', and the 'Chicago Tribune' logo. To the right are 'SUBSCRIBE 4 weeks for 99¢' and 'LOG IN' buttons. Below the navigation bar, the date 'THURSDAY MAY 16, 2019' and various category links (SPORTS, BREAKING, BUSINESS, E-NEWSPAPER, OPINION, ENTERTAINMENT, BEST REVIEWS, ADVERTISING) are visible, along with a weather icon showing '60°'. The main headline reads 'Sherpa climber scales Mount Everest for a record 23rd time'. Below the headline is a photograph of a man in a plaid shirt and cap, identified as Kami Rita. To the right of the photo is an advertisement for cars.com featuring Emma Alvarez, a salesperson with over one million reviews and a 5-star rating. The ad includes a 'Meet me now' button and the cars.com logo. Below the photo, there is a caption: 'Record holding Sherpa guide Kami Rita speaks with the Associated Press in Kathmandu, Nepal. (Niranjan Shrestha / AP)'. Below the caption, the author is listed as 'By Binaj Gurubacharya, Associated Press'.

“Sherpa climber scales Mount Everest for a record 23rd time.” Wow! That’s Kami Rita of Nepal. Amazing!

Now let me remind you what a Sherpa is. A Sherpa is essentially a human being who acts in the role of a pack-mule to get you and your stuff to the top of Everest. Here’s a picture of two Sherpas...



See how they are loaded down? Sherpas are mostly men from the country of Nepal. As I’ve told you, Mt. Everest is in the Himalayan mountain chain that runs through the country of Nepal. Are you familiar with Nepal? See the map...



Nepal is the country sandwiched between China to the North and India to the South. Nepal only has about 25 million people. That's only about three times more than our state. Sherpas have unbelievable stamina. Medical studies have been done on these folks and it has been found that because they live at such a high altitude that they are better equipped to climb than the average person, because they are able to function on less oxygen, and because they're able to do so, they have unbelievable ENDURANCE.

Indeed, Sherpas are amazing people. They get loaded down with around 80-100lbs of gear and yet, they are expected to lead the way...they go ahead of the climbers (say, "you and me") and they fix the ropes so we can safely climb... Like this Sherpa is doing...



They literally risk their lives for the climbers. Take a look at this next picture...



They also set ladders across massive what are called: “crevasses” that exist on Everest. A crevasse is crack in the ice glaciers on a mountain. See that Sherpa loaded down who has crossed that crevasse. He’s waiting for the climber to come across after he has set the ladder for their safety. You see, on the way up to each Camp, the Sherpas are the ones who take care of setting up the tents, cooking the food and carrying the oxygen tanks in preparation for the Death Zone at Camp 4, from where they will eventually attempt to summit. Here’s another picture of Kami Rita...



Do you know what Rita gets paid for risking his life to climb Everest? Well, the average base pay for a Sherpa is just \$2000. Sounds terrible doesn't it. But, the average annual salary of a Nepalese citizen is just \$645/year. Here’s another picture of Rita...he’s on top of Everest...



He took a selfie holding his Nepalese flag indicating he’s from the capital of Nepal...the town of Kathmandu. Yes, Rita made it to the top of Mount Everest a week ago this past Wednesday for a 23rd time. Kami Rita is 49 years old and first scaled Everest in 1994 and has been making the trip up nearly every year since. His father was among one of the first Sherpa guides ever employed to help climbers reach the summit. He too, was known for his tremendous endurance!

Now, why do I tell you all of this? Look back at the last verse of chapter 10, verse 39.

Hebrews 10:39

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Sherpas don't shrink back on Everest and true Christians don't shrink back in this life...we endure...we persevere. It's called the "Perseverance of the saints." It's a doctrine of our faith in Christ.

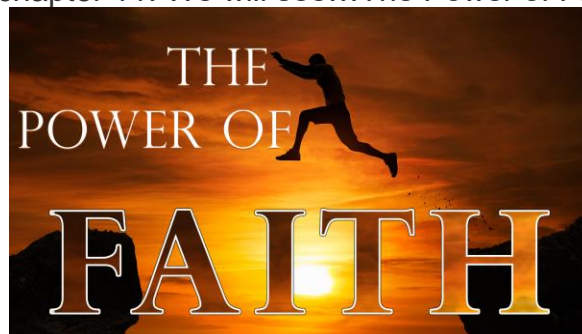
So, you may ask, "Well, what does all of this mean? Are you saying, Christians will never sin? Is that what 'shrink back' means? To never sin! No." In the Greek "shrink back," means to walk away and never return. It's the description of an apostate. What is an apostate? It's someone who abandons the faith. In our mountain-climbing analogy...they throw off the backpack and leave the mountain and never return. No...as believers...true believers in Christ...we might mess up on our journey. We might even stop climbing for a while...we might even stray from the path...but, eventually, if we are truly born again...we will return to the ropes and continue climbing.

Now think with me church...why does Paul go from talking about making sure these believers don't stop meeting together to talking about apostasy? Remember last week... Go back to verse 23...

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

So, you'll remember...some were wavering, weren't they? And what we just read in verses 26-39 is an encouragement not to give up...not to walk away...it's a call to endure...and it's also the fourth of five warning passages in the book of Hebrews. What's the warning? Don't walk away! Don't abandon the faith...don't leave the mountain...keep climbing...even though it's extremely difficult and hard! Even though it may be hard to see. Keep going...have faith... And that's exactly where we're headed next week, in chapter 11. We will see...The Power of Faith!



I hope you'll come for this new series!

So the question is: How can you tell who an apostate is? Well, think of Judas... He's probably the greatest example of an apostate of all time.



Judas had been with Jesus for over two years... They had shared meals together, travelled throughout Israel together, slept on the ground beside of one another... And yet, he walked away didn't he? For 30 pieces of silver.



That was his price to walk away. About \$15,000 in today's money. Would you walk away from Jesus for \$15,000? How about \$150,000? How about \$150 million? How about \$150 billion? Do you have a price? If you do, the Apostle John describes you...

1 John 2:19

¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

Now watch this play out...look at verse 26 again.

Hebrews 10:26-31

²⁶For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

I'm intrigued today by those who say God is pictured as nothing but a God of love in the NT and a God of judgment in the OT. Well, for those who say they don't believe in a God of judgment in the New Testament...I would say they don't understand the Cross... See this...



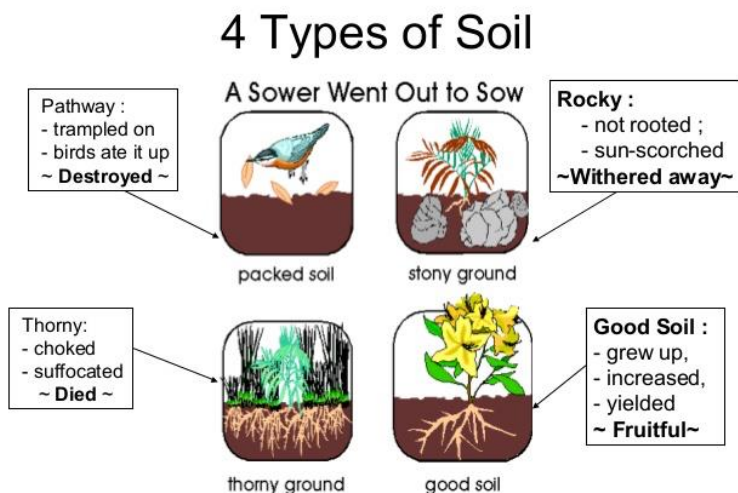
What do you see there? You say, "Love." And I agree...but, let me tell you what else you see there! Judgment. Do you understand that! That is love, YES...but that's also God's judgment on sin... your sin...my sin! That's what it cost Jesus!

Listen, when you and I look at the cross...and we see Jesus hanging there, writhing pain...that is the price of your sin and mine and that is the price of: judgment And, here's the truth of this passage...if anyone can look upon Jesus and the price that He paid and claim to know Him...and yet eventually walk away, like Judas did...to never return...then the Bible is clear...there is nothing else that can be done for that person. They have trampled under foot the Son of God and profaned His blood, and judgment awaits. And that's why it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. This is a SOBER warning...do not walk away...ENDURE...just like our Savior did...on His mountain...Mt. Calvary.

Let me show you a quote from a commentary I read:

"The fact that they 'go on sinning deliberately even after receiving knowledge of the truth' indicates that the people in view are not (and never were) genuine believers; that is, these are people who have never genuinely embraced the gospel in a way that has resulted in a life of faith, obedience, and the bearing of fruit." ESV Bible Commentary

And isn't this what Jesus talked about in the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13)...the 4 types of soil.



Remember our lady at Sam's Club, offering the Asiago cheese on a toothpick...



You taste it and see that it's good...but, then you choose not to pay the price... You walk away. Listen, there are many people who LOOK like they have come to Christ...they walk an aisle, shake

a preacher's hand, even get baptized...but, so many walk away...never to be heard from again... That's like getting to Base Camp on Everest...but, never deciding to climb...

The Apostle Paul knew something about this...a guy named Demas seemed to be part of the team. In Colossians 4 Paul said:

Colossians 4:14

¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

Looks good, right? Nope... He walked away. The last letter Paul ever wrote was 2 Timothy. He wrote it right before he was beheaded in Rome and he said these tragic words...

2 Timothy 4:10a (A/V Team, only the first part of the verse, please.)

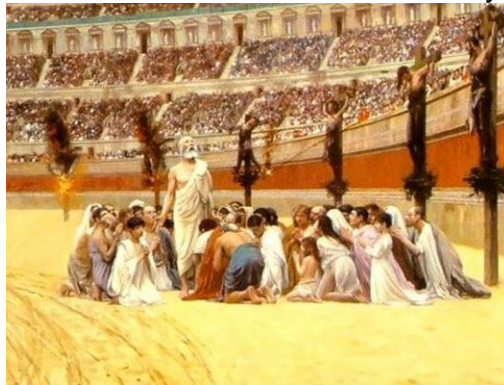
¹⁰ For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.

Demas was in love with the world, seed gobbled up by the thorns...just like Judas...and they deserted the faith. But, here in Hebrews 10, Paul says...let this not be said of us...remember how far you have climbed...don't stop now...keep going! Remember where you've come from... See it... verse 32...

Hebrews 10:32-34

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Listen, we talked about this last week...remember this is what they were enduring in Rome...



Christians were being thrown to lions and burned on stakes...but, Paul said... "Don't give up...ENDURE!! Oh... I can feel Paul imploring them, can't you! Look at verse 35...

Hebrews 10:35-39

³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

BUT WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO SHRINK BACK. Listen, Christian in the room, no matter you're going through...the Lord will help you and you can endure through Him! I know it may be

difficult and painful right now. But, remember Jesus! Paul said, "Recall the former days." That points back to Jesus. Recall...Remember what He did for you... See Him on the cross again...



That's Jesus...Hey...He's our Sherpa, the One who carried our burden and laid down the ropes and the ladders so we might cross the crevasse of death and reach the summit of heaven! Remember Jesus! Will you do that today... Remember Jesus when it's hard...Remember Jesus when you feel like giving up... Remember Jesus and do not shrink back, but keep climbing!
